

# IN THE SERVICE OF FRATERNITY

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Fraternity – the very theme of our Rosicrucian World Convention. How do we understand this term?

By its standard definition it has two meanings:

1. A group of people who share a common occupation or interest i.e., a kind of organization, community, or guild.
2. A sense of friendship and mutual support, similar to the way a family behaves.

In Czech, we have two different but linguistically related words for these two meanings. In many languages, however, they share the same term.

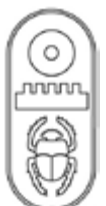
The importance of fraternity, in both senses, is demonstrated in many cultures by a similar example: the parable of the rods, which shows the possible weakness of a single entity and the strength of the unity of many.

Let me briefly read the one from Czech history.

The prince of Moravia, Svatopluk, had three sons, and, when he was dying, he divided his country into three parts and left one share to each of his three sons, leaving the eldest son to be a great prince and the other two to be under his command. He exhorted them to not fall out with one another, giving them this example by way of illustration: he brought three sticks and bound them together and gave them to the first son to break, and when he was not strong enough, handed them on to the second, and in like manner to the third, and then he separated the three sticks and gave one each to the three of them. When they had taken them and were bidden to break them, they broke them through at once. By means of this illustration he exhorted them and said: "If you remain undivided in concord and love, you shall be unconquered by your adversaries and invincible; but if strife and rivalry come among you and you divide yourselves into three governments, not subject to the eldest brother, you shall be both destroyed



*A wall etching showing the legend of Svatopluk's sticks and his three sons, at Prostějov Castle in the Czech Republic.*





by one another and brought to utter ruin by the enemies who are your neighbors.”

Our Order is undoubtedly an organization. And at the same time, we express fraternal feelings toward each other. As you of course know, our Order is not limited to fratres, i.e., men only. This was one of the first things that attracted me to the Order. In addition, our fraternity is traditionally hierarchical, i.e., there must be some kind of structured leadership to guide the community and thus be of service to the community. Hence the title of this piece.

In today’s human brotherhood, we can’t help but observe an increasing lack of brotherly feelings. We can see nations fighting against other nations, races fighting against other races, the poor against the rich, but also the hatred of car drivers against pedestrians, or car drivers against other car drivers, even men against women. One might naively expect that some global threat would unite the human race to fight against this. Even that doesn’t work, as we saw during the pandemic. It’s so easy to fall into pessimism or even into the Dark Night of the Soul with all its devastation and doubts.

But we can help our brothers and sisters to overcome the Dark Night of the Soul by increasing the spirit of brotherhood. It’s our task. It’s our service to the fraternity. Despite this, we have to seek the strength to fight the Dark Night of the Soul in ourselves, which makes

the support of the fraternity significant and, over time, more important. After all, don’t we share and benefit from the same Égrégore?

And now for something completely different.

Let me switch from this official, but rather cold and theoretical side, to my own very personal reflections. Since I entered this brotherhood, there have been many people who have had a tremendous impact on my life, both personally and also in terms of my function as a Grand Master. The first one to mention is of course the Imperator Emeritus Frater Christian Bernard, who nominated me for this office.

As I did many times before, I’ll do my best to comply with Comenius’s prohibition about writing and publishing work that would be a mere repetition of what has already been written; and command that every new work must tell something new about a topic; or deal with it from a new perspective or within a new context; or make a complicated topic more simple, clear, and accessible to the wider public. Thus I’m not going to pay another tribute to any of the past Imperators – there are already so many!

So instead, I’d like to mention now three other fratres, who unfortunately passed through transition in recent years. They are not forgotten, but from my point of view they are scarcely mentioned, so

I'd like to pay them a little private tribute, but in an informal and unorthodox way, as I usually do. I will not give any personal information about them, such as their birthplaces, biographies, and so on. I will also not give boring dates, nor important, but probably well known, achievements of their lives. I have to admit that because I had so little time to spend with them, some of these facts are even unknown to me. And those facts belong to the realm of historians. That's not my thing, and I would easily forget them. Instead, I'd like to express what they meant to me for my way of life within the Order.

At the same time, I'm not going to rely on my scattered memories. I remember some funny moments that might amuse you, but these are also not important. I mentioned that my recollections are going to be unorthodox ones. Let me explain. To this effect I need to reveal a bit of my history in the Order.

When I applied for my membership, the first thing I did the very same day was offer my service for the improvement of the graphic design of some of the publications. At the time, all materials were distributed as copies of copies of poorly typeset originals. This applied also to the *Mastery of Life* booklet, which had been copied several times on copiers of doubtful quality.

This is the way I managed to progressively integrate my skills more and more into service for the Order. This involved my official education and graduation in electronic sciences, sound studio engineering, and information technology, as well as some language skills. However, there was still one area of skill that I had admired all along, but hadn't been able to find a way to use. It was music.

In these tough and dark days, I found it increasingly difficult to put into words what I felt. I know I'm not alone in having had this block, especially in my position.



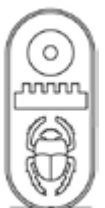
*Michal Eben, playing piano.*

There are so many things I'd like to share with my beloved fraternity, but in regards to my office, rules, and duties, I simply can't. This troubles me a lot.

So I managed to find relief in the arts. Some people might be able to paint a picture, some could compose a poem. That is not my cup of tea, but being a musician is something I've always found to be proper and relaxing for me in a special way, both in musical composition and performance. And being primarily a jazzman, performing especially with improvisation, which I consider the freest way of self-expression

I'd like to suggest that you listen to three little pieces of my music as homage to these three valuable men. I don't dare expect that they would like my music; in fact, I never even had a chance to know their preferences in this area. But I'm sure they would accept them as my deepest demonstration of the admiration and respect that I have for them. I dare to presume they would just be polite enough to call them "interesting."

Don't try to analyze my music too much. Instead, please let it infuse your mind and perhaps I'll manage to transfer a tiny part of my sentiments towards these three people to you as well. These pieces don't talk about the people mentioned above. They talk about my memories of, admiration for, and feelings towards them.



Some of you won't like my music, but these pieces are quite short, and I dare to ask you to accept them as my most sincere and honest expression of my feelings.

These three men I selected are – at least for me – the highest examples of what our Imperator emphasizes and what I've always completely shared: that we, officers of our Order, are merely representatives of the offices vested in us. And that we should carry out our tasks with the utmost humility. And this is the real reason why this piece is called "In the Service of Fraternity." I do not dare call them friends, since we have spent so little time together, but I do feel that we are brothers, and that is more than enough for me.

The first one of them is Frater Claude Papillon, the former director of the Rosicrucian Domain in Lachute, quite close to here. His humor was absolutely remarkable, and so was the effort he gave when undertaking any task, but the main lesson from him was his humility, with which he always fulfilled all his duties. I've never met a person so very dedicated to the service of fraternity. He always said that it's an honor for him to undertake his job – and he meant it!



*Claude Papillon.*

I suggest listening to the following music titled "Butterfly Over the Lake," in memory of him: [https://youtu.be/6QTLHKg2\\_Y4](https://youtu.be/6QTLHKg2_Y4).

The second one I'd like to mention here is Frater Charles Vega Parucker, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge for Portuguese language jurisdiction. As I promised I'll skip all the personal data and achievements. I'd only like to mention that he was important to me in the sense that he taught me how humor might be used in serious mystical work, without detracting from its seriousness.



*Charles Vega Parucker.*

I suggest listening to the following music titled "Wig on the Chimney," in memory of him: <https://youtu.be/rAuS1uebxS4>.

The third one is Frater Irving Söderlund, the Supreme Treasurer of AMORC and former Grand Master of the Nordic Grand Lodge. He was one of the first high officers of the Order I ever met. It was he who convinced me, after much hesitation, to accept the office of Grand Master. And it was he who first gave me advice on how to successfully carry out my duties. I will keep him forever in my heart as an image of the true Rosicrucian.



*Irving Söderlund.*

I suggest listening to the following music titled “Remembrance of the Southern Grove,” in memory of him: <https://youtu.be/Te-SYNsVyw8>.

These three people, of course, do not represent the complete picture of the Order, but for me personally they represent its highest ideals.

I asked you not to analyze my music, nor do I ask you to like it. These pieces are

not tailored to suit everyone. The feelings expressed in musical compositions are often driven by an unknown force. So I don’t know exactly why, but the first one for our Canadian frater has more of a retro disco feeling, the second one, dedicated to our Brazilian frater is not a samba, and the third one for our Swedish frater is mostly written in the Lydian or Lydian-dominant scale, which is typical for some Moravian folk songs and, surprisingly enough, for the Brazilian style baião. Don’t ask me why this is so. It simply happened.

I don’t have the hope that you will remember my music. Instead, remember these men. They were crucial for me along my spiritual path. I believe – or wish – that you all meet your own examples of what it takes to be a real Rosicrucian.

Thank you for joining me in my desire to pay tribute to these incredible brothers. There’s no need to pray for them, I suppose. They already have a fixed place where they currently reside.



*The Robert Fludd Rose and Cross mural in the Rosicrucian Cultural Center of New York City.*

